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Factors Analysis of Grammar Errors in Students` Writing: A Basis for New Teaching Methods

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ABSTRACT

Meaning cannot be transferred well if there is error in grammar. This paper aims to determine the grammar errors committed by the 6th semester students of English Education Department as basis for new method. Specifically, the study aims to answer: 1) what grammar errors are committed by the 6th semester students of English Education in their written text; and 2) what factors caused the students to commit these errors in writing as evident on their written composition. The respondents of this study consisted of English education students, Semester 6. Result showed that the common grammar errors committed by the 6th semester students of English Education are: verb f, tenses of the verb, sentence structure and word order, the use of articles and preposition, punctuation and capitalization, and spelling. 2 Big factors as the cause of errors are : direct factors and indirect factors.

Keywords: error analysis, grammar errors, types of errors, and sources of errors

INTRODUCTION

Even though students are already in the advanced semester, grammar errors are still found in their writings. Whether because their grammar lecturers use wrong teaching method, the ability of students are low, their native language becomes the main cause or there is no motivation to learn and apply grammar correctly. whereas *mastering grammar is a complex process that requires a series of decisions when and why to use one form rather than the other*” (Celce-Murcia, 2002). In speaking or writing using English as a second language (L2) needs grammatical proficiency.

Shanklin (1994)⁹suggested that “*grammatical proficiency is both an important*

pedagogical skill and an important part in learning the target. Basically, there are two kinds of grammar. First is the descriptive grammar which refers to the structure of English used by speakers and writers. Second is the prescriptive grammar which deals with the syntax and word structures of a language, usually intended in learning the target language. The study of grammar all by itself won't necessarily make you a better writer.

Grammar learning method is very many. Many traditional teachers still use memorization methods. There are also others who use other methods that focus more on capturing students' own experiences. English grammar is considered a separate part of educational experience and most English teachers try to integrate grammar teaching in the four elements of the General English module.

Grammar is a pattern, and if this pattern is not suitable then the meaning of a message is not conveyed. students who find it difficult to grammar usually tend not to understand the pattern errors.

This year's graduates really require students to master English well, the English language skills they are required to power include: Listening, reading, speaking and writing. English graduates with poor grammar will greatly affect the name of the campus and student interest in the future campus. therefore perfect grammar should be the main focus of every English course.

Grammar has become a very complicated problem in English. While modern technology and social media have less formal forms of communication, employers still expect perfect grammar in professional settings. Striking errors in the construction of sentences are assessed before the contents of the work. To prepare students for excellent communication, students need to improve their grammar skills and familiarize the rules related to them.

Researchers came up with a study to analyze the factors causing this error to occur. preliminary research is to find out the location of grammar errors that students often do. then analyze the causes of why this happened.

Research Questions

This study was conducted to determine the grammar errors committed by the 6th semester students of English Education Department. Specifically, the study sought to answer

the following questions:

1. What types of grammar errors are committed by the 6th semester students of English Education Department in their written?
2. What are the main factors that cause of these errors?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was based on the Universal Grammar theory of Noam Chomsky (1960). This theory says that the human brain contains a limited set of rules for organizing language. This implies in turn that all languages have a common structural basis; the set of rules is what is known as Universal Grammar. He argued that the ability to learn grammar is hard-wired into the brain. Evidently, development of language in the individual must involve three factors: (1) genetic endowment, which sets limits on the attainable languages, thereby making language

METHODS

In accordance with the title of the research, this research is included in qualitative research. Data qualitative emphasizes more on descriptive analysis of the data obtained. But before obtaining the facts about the causal factors, researchers used descriptive quantitative methods. With this method researchers reveal the causes of errors that are mostly done by students.

The students written writing during the class were chosen as basis in determining grammar errors. These grammar errors were classified and categorized accordingly as reflected in the students writing. Analysis of data was done and identified what makes the students commit these errors.

Error Analysis Procedure

In more detail, the procedures or steps taken in error analysis (EA) are: (1) identifying errors, not only those related to linguistic factors but also with non-linguistic factors; (2) describes errors, namely classifying types of errors in the form of addition, omission, alteration, and misordering; (3) explain the error, which is to look for causes of errors, which

are generally in the form of fossilization, overgeneralization, hyper-correction, misconception, and misinformation; (4) evaluating errors, namely analyzing errors qualitatively and quantitatively; and (5) correct errors.

According to Richard (1971) and Fisiak (1985) the causes of grammatical errors include over-generalization, knowledge of limitations of rules (ignorance of rule restrictions), application of incomplete application of rules and misrepresenting concepts (false concepts hyphotesized).

RESULTS

This section deals with the findings and analysis of data gathered. The following are the results and findings:

Table 1: Common Students Grammar Errors

Type of error	frequency	
	total	percentase
Verb agreement	220	28, 4%
Plural singular	115	23,8%
Passive voice	161	20,8%
Article	92	11,9%
preposision	184	14, 8%
total	772	100%

Table 1 reveals that PRE-IFP students top most grammar error is in subject-verb agreement. It is obvious that this item has the highest percentage of error with 28.4percent. The rest of the errors are the plural singular and passive voice, article and preposition

Table 2: Factors of Error

Question		Answer
Feedback from lecturer	often	
The effect of lecturer feedback	50% of students answer motivated	50% of students answer under 70% motivated
The effect of lecturer feedback	50% motivated	50 % they are shy
Time for studying English per day	50% often	30% not more than2—3 perday 20% only answer study with film text
Lecturer's test are too difficult	50% no	50% yes

Table 2 represents the overall summary of grammar errors factors committed by students 6th semester as reflected in their written composition. It can be noted that for the 6th semester, subject-verb agreement is ranked 1 as the most common type of grammar errors of students in the study group. It is evident that this item had the highest percentage of errors. In the students' essay, it can be noted that the plural subject does not agree with the singular verb.

Examples of students' write up:

1. Politics *want* become the most powerful. (singular subject does not agree with plural verb)
2. It *encourage* people to come to campaign.

It goes to show that students already haven't some knowledge of grammar rules when it comes to subject-verb agreement. For the tenses of the verb, Semester 6 has the highest number of error as this error is ranked 1 for this study group is worst. The use of articles and preposition are another errors committed by the study group. It reflects in the Table that, students got number of error in these items as these errors ranked 1 for this study group.

Factors of Errors

Students' grammar errors as reflected in their written composition are caused by two factors: direct factors and indirect factors. Direct factors are due to interlingual and intralingual transfers. Interlingual factors are evident in the use of subject-verb agreement, tenses of the verbs, word orders, the use of articles and prepositions and the sentence structures. This is due to the learner's exposure to his native language (L1). This interference occurs when a structure of language in the second language acquisition manifests some degree of difference and similarity with the equivalent item or structure in the student's first language" (Jackson, 1981).

High percentage of errors in this study occurred within the category of subject-verb agreement which can be gleaned as rank 1 error for the three study groups. This finding may explain that the use of English verbs was a major learning difficulty for all students. The use of verb tense shows that the students still find difficulty when and how to use the tense and the form of the verb. The tenses most commonly misused were the simple past tense, future tense, past perfect and present simple as reflected in their written composition. It can be justified by the incomprehensibility of the correct form and use

and usage of the verb.

‘Word Order Interference’ occurs because of the differences in the composition of words, particularly noun phrases and adjectival phrases, between the foreign language and the native language. In the native language the modifier should be placed after the modified word, but, in the foreign language, the modifier word should be put before.

DISCUSSION

Factors of Errors

Many experts said that interlingual errors are those which are related to the native language (NL). They said that interlingual errors when the learners' NL habits (patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent them, to some degree, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language (SL) (Corder, 1971). Interference (negative transfer) is the negative influence of the mother tongue language (MTL) on the performance of the target language (TL) learner (Lado, 1964).

Intralingual errors are those due to the language being learned, independent of the native language. According to Richards (1971) these are items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language. The learner, in this case, tries to “derive the rules behind the data to which he/she has been exposed, and may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language” (Richards, 1974, p. 6).

In other words, they produce deviant or ill- formed sentences by erroneously applying their knowledge of TL rules and structures to new situations. Richard says that intralingual interference is due to overgeneralization which is associated with redundancy or reduction of words. Students tend to create a deviant structure that makes their sentences grammatically incorrect. Ignorance of rules and structures of English is another factor for intralingual errors. Most of the students apply rules to context to which they don't apply.

Meanwhile, indirect factors is due to the students' low motivation in learning the L2. Learners have low motivation in learning because their parents give them little support. They have low motivation to study because they themselves have no interest to learn. It appears that some parents do not give their children enough support to study at home. They do not have the habit of giving a reward, for example, if their children are successful in their English achievement. No parents give their children extracurricular lesson of English such as in the form of private lessons.

Another factor maybe a teacher factor. It seems that a teacher is not creative enough in conducting the writing classes. He does not utilize enough media in his teaching-learning interactions. On the other hand, he is still stuck to the textbook when he carries out the teaching learning process. It is no wonder that the English instruction runs monotonously and boringly.

In most cases, when students are given a writing task, they get difficulties to do it. In the same way, the teacher's frequency in teaching writing is low. There is no lesson plan for the writing skill among eight kinds of lesson plans. In addition, the teacher's supervisor admits that the instruction process of writing has very low frequency.

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